



# ADJC TODAY

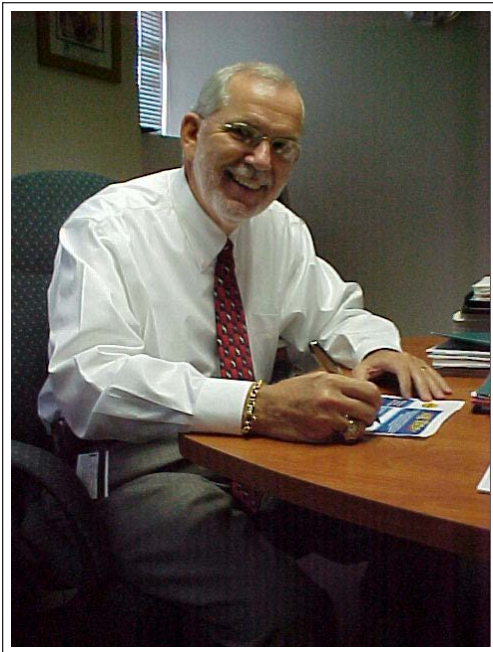
*The mission of the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections is to enhance public protection by changing the delinquent thinking and behaviors of juvenile offenders committed to the Department.*

JANET NAPOLITANO, GOVERNOR

DAVID A. GASPAR, DIRECTOR

September 2003

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



### *Efforts To Change Delinquent Behavior Yield Results*

The Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC) believes in measuring for results. This commitment is the reason why a considerable investment has been made in measuring whether the programs and policies employed by this Department have been effective.

That is why I am gratified by the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Outcome Study, compiled by ADJC's Research and Development staff in conjunction with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. The data show that the number of ADJC youth entering adult prison has dropped for three straight years. In the latest year for which data were available, fewer than eight out of 10 youth became adult inmates within three years.

These measurements demonstrate that the hard work of our staff has been effective, and it shows that taxpayers are getting a good return on the resources they invest in our programs. Other research suggests that taxpayers save \$1.7 million to \$2.3 million every time a high-risk youth is kept from becoming an adult criminal. Based on those figures, Arizona taxpayers could save more than \$1.4 billion to \$1.9 billion in 1999 alone because more than 835 youth who went through ADJC programming that year did not enter the adult system within three years.

And all of this has been accomplished during a time when state funding for ADJC has remained relatively stable, even while certain costs continued to escalate.

ADJC remains committed to improvement. This Department will continue to focus its energies on a number of initiatives, including a new classification system, improved cultural competency, and enhanced programs for the growing number of youth with mental-health and special education needs who are being sent to this Department. We are proud to be delivering a level of service that helps to create safer communities while providing taxpayers with a reasonable return on their investment. 🌟

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## ***ADJC Youth Demonstrate Success By Staying Out Of Adult Prison***

For seven years, the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC) has sustained its commitment to measure the impact of its programs on delinquent behavior. During that time 6,064 youth were tracked for one to three years to determine whether they:

- Were recommitted to ADJC by one of the 15 county juvenile courts.
- Committed a new offense that violated the terms of Conditional Liberty, also known as parole, and returned to an ADJC secure facility.
- Were convicted in adult court on new charges and were sentenced to the Arizona Department of Corrections.

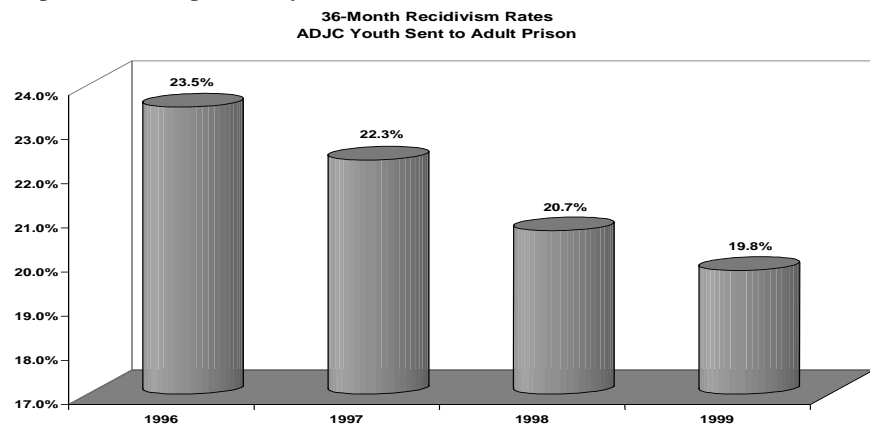
Here are the results:

### **Fewer ADJC youth return to custody**

After one year, only 17.8 percent of youth returned to adult or juvenile custody in 2001, the latest year studied, and 82.2 percent were still in their communities. In 1996, the first year of the study, 20.6 percent recidivated within one year.

After two years, 36 percent recidivated and 64 percent were still in their communities. That is a significant improvement from 1996, the first year of the study, when 37.5 percent returned to custody.

After three years, nearly 57 percent of youth did not return to custody, better than the 55.4 percent in the previous year.



### **Only two out of ten ADJC youth become adult criminals**

While the return to custody numbers are significant, and demonstrate increased success, an especially relevant measure of success is to determine the number of youthful offenders who continue criminal activity and end up in the Department of Corrections (DOC), Arizona's adult prison system.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Outcome Study found that for three straight years, fewer youth who complete ADJC programs went on to adult prison. Just 3.9 percent were re-sentenced to the Department of Corrections (DOC) in 1999, the latest year for which data were available.

Even more significant was the recidivism rate three years after leaving an ADJC facility. This number is important because a 1997 study<sup>1</sup> concluded that tracking a youth for three years captures 75 to 80 percent of the recidivism that will occur among such youth.

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Only 19.8 percent of the 1,044 youth who completed ADJC programs in 1999 were sent to DOC after three years. The remaining 80.2 percent had not gone on to adult prison.

### **Effective Juvenile Programs Save Taxpayers more than \$1 billion a year**

Changing delinquent behavior is a cost-effective investment of state funds. Juveniles sent to ADJC by the 15 county juvenile courts represent a challenging population of youth. These may include substance abuse, mental health challenges, family dysfunction, educational deficits and emotional, physical and sexual trauma. These are high-risk youth who pose a significant risk to re-offend, and the cost of continued criminal behavior is high, due to the future costs for police, courts, probation and parole, and incarceration.

A 1998 study<sup>2</sup> attempted to calculate what taxpayers save every time a youth who represents a high risk to re-offend demonstrates a change in behavior. Even after excluding the costs incurred by victims of new crimes, the study concluded that each high-risk youth who is deterred from becoming a career criminal saves taxpayers \$1.7 million to \$2.3 million.

Given that more than 800 youth who went through ADJC secure facilities in 1999 did not return to adult prison, their individual successes present evidence that Arizona taxpayers avoided \$1.4 billion to \$1.9 billion in future costs.

Determining the number of youth who enter the adult system is only a partial measurement of the effectiveness of ADJC programs. A more inclusive measurement examines whether these chronic delinquent youth are avoiding a return to the adult or juvenile systems once they return to their communities.

Youth who are sent to an ADJC secure school have repeatedly failed a number of intervention efforts by society. Many were expelled from school or dropped out, and were repeatedly arrested and referred to juvenile court. For example, 72 percent of the juveniles sent to ADJC in 2001 had four or more juvenile court referrals.

For that reason, some youth fail to meet the standards of parole. In fact, most youth who did return to custody over the past seven years did so because of parole violations.

In 2001, Director David A. Gaspar and the ADJC Leadership Team established the Sunrise Mountain Parole Violator Center for boys, and the Independence Parole Violator Center for Girls. These steps were taken in response to consultations with the juvenile courts about ways to hold youth more accountable.

Youth are sent to the parole violator centers when they are charged with violating their conditions of parole. They go through a hearing process and a determination is made whether a youth should be reinstated on parole, placed on parole reinforcement status pending an adjustment in their parole plan, and a small number of youth are discharged from parole based on separate determinations.

During 2002, 24.9 percent of youth sent to these centers were sent back to a secure juvenile facility, 48.4 percent were placed on parole reinforcement, 25.6 percent were returned to a secure facility, and 1.1 percent were discharged from parole.

***Given that more than 800 youth who went through ADJC secure facilities in 1999 did not return to adult prison, their individual successes present evidence that Arizona taxpayers avoided \$1.4 billion to \$1.9 billion in future costs.***

<sup>1</sup> Robert Barnoski, *Standards for improving Research Effectiveness in Adult and Juvenile Justice*, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, December 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Cohen, *The Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth* *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 1998.

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## ***ADJC Youth Earn Absolute Discharge Through Successful Behavior***

The following are some of the youth who earned an Absolute Discharge from parole in the past month by demonstrating a successful change in behavior.

Their success is result of hard work by a number of staffers - housing unit staff, teachers, psych associates, family service coordinators, parole officers and members of our private provider network. Each of them have helped these youth deal with family crises, personal setbacks and countless challenges. Each member of the ADJC team deserves to feel some satisfaction for a job well done.

***The real sense of accomplishment belongs to the youth who have overcome their past mistakes to become law-abiding citizens.***

In the final analysis, of course, the real sense of accomplishment belongs to the youth who have overcome their past mistakes to become law-abiding citizens. Here are their stories:

**Joseph**, who turned 18 in July, has overcome a number of different challenges. He has paid off his restitution orders, complied with all aspects of his parole plan, participated with his family to complete Functional Family Therapy sessions, and avoided any additional contacts with law enforcement, and any new felony or misdemeanor charges, for six months. He received his Absolute Discharge from Parole on July 8.

**Christopher**, 17, was committed to ADJC in connection with theft and burglary charges and was paroled after spending a year in a secure school. He immediately started counseling sessions upon his release and enrolled in community college, attending classes regularly and avoiding negative contact with his former peers. He is living a positive, substance-free lifestyle and says that one of his main goals is to make his parents proud. According to his parole officer, Christopher's parents are extremely happy to have a son who is respectful and mature. Christopher earned his Absolute Discharge on July 25.

**James**, 17, was committed to ADJC in connection with drug possession charges and was released from a secure facility after six months. He immediately enrolled in a community college, graduated from an Intensive Outpatient Substance Abuse Program and participated faithfully in counseling programs. He completed a community service requirement within a month of being released, and has avoided any involvement with drugs. James earned his Absolute Discharge on July 30. 🍀

### ***MIS Update***

*by Susan Lucero, Information Technology Specialist, Management Information Systems*

MIS has changed the duties for IT support to the following:

Jim Viersen: AMS; Matt Gilman: BCS & all Parole Offices; Stuart Jamison: EPS & PV Center; Spencer Cochran: CMS & Central Office; John Wagner: Education.

In the month of August, the following program upgrades were made in Windows YouthBase:

- ▶ The **Risk Assessment** has been removed from the DOS Version and upgraded to the Windows YouthBase.
- ▶ The classification portion of the DOS version of the risk has been renamed **Length of Stay** and is located in the Offense History of Windows YouthBase.
- ▶ There are two reports in the DOS version that were consolidated into one report in the Windows YouthBase reporting tool. 🍀

*ADJC Today* is the employee newsletter of the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections. Unless noted otherwise, articles are written by the Director's Office staff. For comments or input, please contact the Director's Office at (602) 542-4303. This document is available in an alternative format upon request.